



ACC NEWS SERVICE

Released: Dec. 4, 1998

B-1B flies first JDAM test sortie

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ELLSWORTH AIR FORCE BASE, S.D. (ACCNS) - The 77th Bomb Squadron's new Block D upgraded B-1B flew the first of seven test sorties Nov. 24.

The crew consisted of Maj. Dan Troutman and Rick Rodriguez and Capt. Chris Brunner and Cam Humphries of the 53rd Training Evaluation Group, Detachment 2.

The crew flew to the Utah Test and Training Range and dropped four inert BDU-56 2,000-pound bombs with live Joint Direct Attack Munition tail kits -- two at 25,000 feet and two at 12,000 feet -- for the first part of the training run.

They then proceeded to Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., and received about 110,000 pounds of fuel from a KC-10 Extender. The final phase of the mission was flown over the Western Test Range, Nellis AFB, Nev., where the B-1B's electronic counter measures were tested, said Troutman. The crew evaluated the aircraft's offensive and defensive modified weapons systems for reliability, effectiveness and accuracy.

"We're looking for a correlation between what the engineers think should happen with the JDAM and with what actually happens in a mission," said Troutman.

People at the UTTR filmed the drop and will evaluate the precision of the guided weapon. The gathered data will be shared with other agencies involved in the JDAM programs.

The 28th Operations Group Weapons Standardization Flight trained several four-man load crews in preparation for the sorties, said Staff Sgt. Robert Cortez, 28th OG load standardization crew member.

The weapons flight certified the first 77th BS load crew Nov. 19 and will train eight more crews by the end of December, said Cortez. "We will also begin training crews from other bases like Dyess AFB (Texas) and Mountain Home AFB (Idaho) over the next few months."

The B-1B's three bays can hold eight GDU-31 2,000-pound bombs or four Mark 65 2,265-pound Naval mines each, said Cortez. "With the new JDAM system, we can drop 24 bombs and hit 24

separate targets with great accuracy."

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